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ER 86-1991X  
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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

MAY 1986  
OCA 86-1765

The Honorable Lee Hamilton, Chairman  
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Director has asked me to respond to your letter of 9 May 1986. The enclosed document addresses your concerns about a CIA-sponsored study involving Soviet emigres. I hope you will find the information helpful.

Sincerely,



David D. Gries  
Director of Congressional Affairs

Enclosure

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HA/OCA  gw (23 May 86)



B-406-IL

The Soviet Interview Project (SIP) is an unclassified project involving several thousand Soviet emigres. It is being conducted under a Department of State contract, and is co-sponsored by the CIA and the Departments of State and Defense--with the majority of the funding split evenly between CIA and Defense.

What is its purpose?

Briefly stated, the purpose of the SIP is to provide answers to three general questions:

- a. How does the Soviet system really work?
- b. How do Soviet citizens work the system?
- c. Where is the Soviet system going?

More generally, the SIP is intended to fill some of the critical gaps in our understanding of the contemporary structure and functioning of Soviet society. It seeks to measure change in the system since the Harvard Project of the early 1950s, which surveyed an earlier generation of Soviet emigres. It also aims in part to serve as a training ground for the next generation of American specialists on the Soviet Union.

Who is doing it?

The National Council for Soviet and East European Research (NCSEER) administers the contract. The Research Team consists of academic specialists in Soviet affairs under the direction of Professor James Millar of the University of Illinois.

What is its status? How long has it been under way?

The SIP has been under way since 1981. The current contract, which was due to expire on 30 June 1986, has been extended until 31 December 1986. The Department of State and NCSEER are in the process of negotiating a new contract to bring the SIP to its conclusion within 18-24 months.

Does it look promising?

The SIP has already produced tangible results in meeting its stated goals. Several research papers have been released, and publication of a book-length report on political, economic, and social findings from the initial SIP General Survey is imminent. A number of promising projects, including one on the Soviet military, address a variety of subjects based on

intensive interviews of selected groups of Soviet emigres with specialized knowledge. Reports on a few of these projects have already appeared, although most remain in the research stage. On the whole, the project promises to make an important contribution to our understanding of contemporary Soviet society.

Is it a classified or unclassified project?

It is unclassified.

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ROUTING SLIP

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11	IG				
12	Compt				
13	D/OLL	X			
14	D/PAO				
15	D/PERS				
16	VC/NIC				
17	PCS/DO		X		
18	D/SOVA		X		
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SUSPENSE		<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span>19 May 86</span> <span><i>ER</i></span> </div> <div style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Date</div>			

Remarks

TO #13: Please prepare an appropriate response for DCI signature.

Executive Secretary

12 May 86

Date

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Executive Registry

86- 1991X

May 9, 1986

Honorable William J. Casey  
Director of Central Intelligence  
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Mr. Casey:

It is my understanding that CIA may be sponsoring a study by the University of Illinois involving Soviet emigres.

I would appreciate knowing whether or not there is such a study and:

- What is its purpose?
- Who is doing it?
- What is its status?
- How long has it been underway?
- Does it look promising?
- Is it a classified or unclassified project?

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,



Lee H. Hamilton  
Chairman